

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 DEAE-00 SNM-02 ABF-01 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2190

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 8229

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, IN

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS: GAO SURVEY AND FUTURE INDIAN OPIUM
PRODUCTION

REF: A. STATE 128541 B. GENEVA 3870

1. EMBOFF DISCUSSED GOI PREDICTIONS ON OPIUM PRODUCTION OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WITH FINANCE MINISTRY OFFICIALS, AS REQUESTED IN REF A. NARCOTICS COMMISSIONER SONALKAR REMARKED THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE PREDICTIONS MORE THAN ONE YEAR AHEAD BECAUSE THE INDIAN OPIUM CROP VARIED GREATLY FROM YEAR TO YEAR DEPENDING UPON THE WEATHER. THE GOI WILL NOT MAKE A FIRM DECISION UNTIL AUGUST ABOUT HOW MUCH POPPY ACREAGE TO PLANT, ALTHOUGH THE AREA PROBABLY WOULD REMAIN THE SAME AS THIS YEAR. PRODUCTION FOR 1975 WOULD BE ROUGHLY 1100-1150 TONS AND EXPORTS 850 TONS, BUT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO GIVE ANY FIRM ESTIMATES FOR 1976 AND BEYOND. SONALKAR EXPECTED THAT GOI WOULD SEEK INTENSIFIED YIELDS FROM THE SAME ACREAGE, RATHER THAN EXPANDING THE PRESENT AREAS OF CULTIVATION.

2. FINANCE MINISTRY OFFICIALS INDICATED THAT ABOUT 8-10,000 TONS OF POPPY STRAW WOULD BE EXPORTED IN 1974, MAINLY TO THE NETHERLANDS AND YUGOSLAVIA. THIS AMOUNT WILL BE SLIGHTLY INCREASED IN 1975. SONALKAR SAID THAT LITTLE OR NO BULK POPPY STRAW WOULD BE EXPORTED WHEN THE POPPY STRAW PROCESSING PLANT CAME ON STREAM.

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3. THE CODEINE PLANT AT NEEMUCH WILL DEFINITELY BE IN OPERATION BY EARLY 1975. SONALKAR BELIEVED THAT IT WOULD PRODUCE ONLY 1 OR 2 TONS OF CODEINE SALTS IN 1975, AND THAT FULL OUTPUT OF 5 TO 7 TONS OF SLATS WOULD NOT BE REACHED UNTIL 1976. THE GOI IS NOT NOW PLANNING ON CONSTRUCTING OTHER CODEINE PLANTS AFTER NEEMUCH.

4. SONALKAR REQUESTED THAT THE EMBASSY OBTAIN OFFICIAL USG ESTIMATES OF US IMPORT REQUIREMENTS FOR 1975 BY THE END OF JUNE, SINCE THE GOI NEEDS THESE ESTIMATES FROM THE US AND UK (ITS TWO LARGEST CUSTOMERS) TO PLAN ITS 1975 PRODUCTION. SONALKAR WAS AWARE OF THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE 240 TON FIGURE PROVIDED TO THE INCB BY THE USG AND THE 375 TON ESTIMATE OF US NEEDS BY AMERICAN DRUG COMPANIES, AND HOPED THAT WE COULD CLEAR THIS UP.
SCHNEIDER

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